

THE NEWSLETTER OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION PROJECTS

12 BROOKE STREET NORTHCOTE 3070 VICTORIA AUSTRALIA

# CONNECT

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1984

No. 25

## OFF TO AMERICA:

Cobden Technical 1983

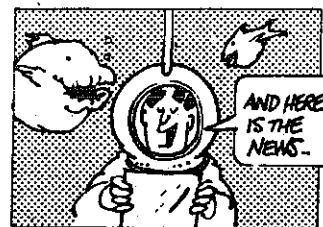


## OFF TO AMERICA?

International Youth Year 1985



# This Issue



The rather confused person on the front cover indicates our present hopes and uncertainties. Going to America in 1985? The possibility exists - to visit the National Association of Student Council's annual conference. The possibility exists - for a national student contingent.

But at the moment we await indications that some funding is possible. We have expressions of interest from the NASC (letter, page 28) and we have people in three states working on proposals. *If you are interested in talking about this proposal, in working on it, in participating in it ... please contact CONNECT urgently.*

The interview with Charles Kingston from West Wyalong High School examines the initiation of the idea for the exchange visit. A brief summary of hopes for 1985 is contained on page 30.

Meanwhile ... this issue contains some of the experiences of one group of students who visited America late last year. We hope to include some more information from Kensington Community High School in a future issue - their basketball team visited America late in 1983 also.

The exciting possibilities under the Participation and Equity program are starting to appear. In particular, how are states responding to the need for two students on the joint Commonwealth-State Committee? CONNECT is interested to hear of what is planned, what experiences are and what support measures are being contemplated or taken. We hope to have some suggested guidelines for a future issue.

This issue is a little late ... pressure of work etc. The next issue will appear very soon and will be largely devoted to the conference report of the Youth Action Programs from last November. Keep writing!

Roger Holdsworth

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Particular acknowledgement and thanks to Nina for the transcription typing of the Charles Kingston interview.



# Off to America:

## YOUTHCRAFT Cobden Technical School

One of the original goals of the Youthcraft projects at Cobden Technical School (Vic) was to provide a situation which contributed to "the development of initiative, resourcefulness and enterprise, and, most importantly, as far as I'm concerned, a belief in themselves," according to Merv Edmunds, a quite unique teacher.

Well, the Studebaker project has certainly met that goal and along the way, many, many more. They are, to name a few:

- \* real participation in decision-making by students, teachers and parents;
- \* the development of cooperation and consensus;
- \* the involvement of the broader community in the school curriculum;
- \* a formidable challenge to a schooling system which purports to be equal and relevant.

You must think I'm exaggerating, but I'm not - read on.

On Wednesday 19th October 1983, I raced out to Tullamarine airport to meet up with 14 kids, Merv and his wife, two mums, two dads, one grandfather and one sister - all on their way to America. This group represents the students and all their families, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents and a whole host of business people who have worked together over the past two years on the Studebaker project.

This project began as a component of Youthcraft, a student-run cooperative. The Studebaker group purchased a 1966 Studebaker Sedan, stripped it down, ran a competition on the design and scale model of a sports-car body, had the competition judged on BTV6 (Ballarat) television, built a fibreglass sportscar. In the beginning, the students simply aimed to build and sell the car, but late in 1982, it was decided that it would be more beneficial for everyone if the money was used for a trip. As one of the students suggested, "Well, we could go for a trip, so that we don't actually gain any money - we gain the experience in another way."

The gaining of good educational experience in another way is what this project is all about.

In my association with this project, I have seen it change from being a gut reaction to rising youth unemployment, to a complete and justified educational experience, and, most amazingly, "it has worked". As Merv is quoted in CONNECT, in the beginning ... "it's hard to believe we knew so little ... in those days of innocence, we tried to structure some things what would offer something of the 'transferable skills' to three general groups of students: those going on at school, those joining the workforce and those doing neither of these.... The structures we saw most suitable were those that enabled the students to at least consider self-employment as a viable alternative to unemployment.... For those who understand these things, the cooperative paid a dividend of 15% in eight months ... the cooperative notion was still a means to an end ... What happened could be of benefit to all, not just some. And this helped eliminate another problem - that of trying to identify with any accuracy those most likely to be unemployed."

So while the project may have started out from more or less within the traditional thought of 'streaming', it grew to recognise the need for schooling in general to become more relevant and meaningful to all kids. It would probably be fair to say that amongst the participants within the Studebaker Project there was a fair sprinkling of those kids who, by traditional measures, would be deemed to be failures. This project proves the point that it is more the case that schools are failing kids rather than the other way around. This point was brought home quite bluntly to me by one of the mums only half an hour before the group left Australia. It was clear in her mind that her son would not have returned to school this year if he had not become involved in the Studebaker Project.

"He started out with no confidence and now he is able to appear on TV and talk at conferences. This wouldn't have been done in other contexts." She added that his extra motivation and involvement had had a beneficial effect on his attitude towards his other subjects even though at times the Project had taken up a lot of time.

In fact, the remarkable thing about watching the development of students involved in a project such as this is that one cannot help but question "what are these kids getting in their other subject areas?" This project has, from the outset, involved students in setting real goals, dealing in economics, politics, history, trades and loads of other educationally defined areas. At every stage of the project, students have been involved in negotiations with local traders, the local community, State and Federal politicians and even national and international companies. Not to mention gaining an appreciation of the intricacies of the operation of a school. As a History, Politics and English teacher myself, I could not help but get enthusiastic about the possibilities of integrated learning such a project offers. The disappointing element, however, is the absolute strength and rigidity of those traditional subject areas and how they are taught within most schools. We have a long way to go in developing teachers and the whole school community to be flexible enough to work together, from the point of where the kids are at and bring the particular expertise associated with standard subjects to exciting relevant ventures. I know only too well the standard fare: this week "India", next week whatever. And the danger associated with the student who can confidently approach strangers and engage them in exciting conversation about the project only to learn that this very student will also tell you that he is a 'failure' at English. I am sorry, but I don't think that is his fault. The crime is that he carries that label with him in black and white for the rest of his life!

The Studebaker Project does not only offer an excellent challenge to all teachers. It is also one of the BEST models of parent participation in education existing in Victoria. While at an administrative and political level the buzz word is 'participation' and has its manifestations in ministerial papers and guidelines of programs like TEAC, SIP, Supplementary Grants and the new Participation and Equity Program (PEP), the reality is often far from the rhetoric.

The parents, as well as the students involved in this project, have played an extremely active role in decision-making along the way. They have given freely of their time and efforts to attend group discussions, go along on outings, ferry students around and even go up to the school and work side by side with their children on the Studebaker. As one mum says, *"It has been a tremendous opportunity to share with the kids. Other kids bring stuff home and parents are involved with each, but the car involved more of the home; other things just happen in the classroom."*

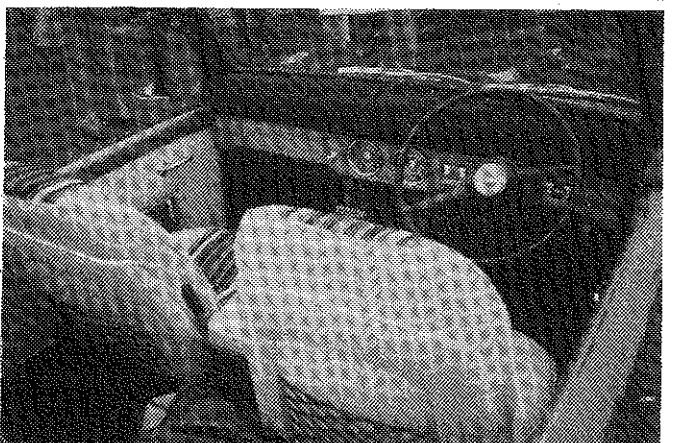
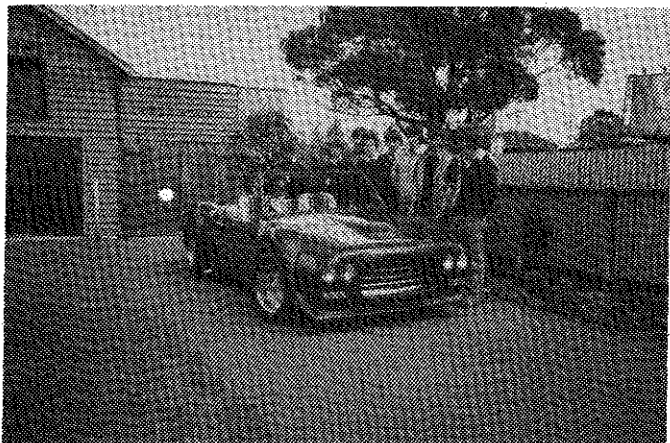
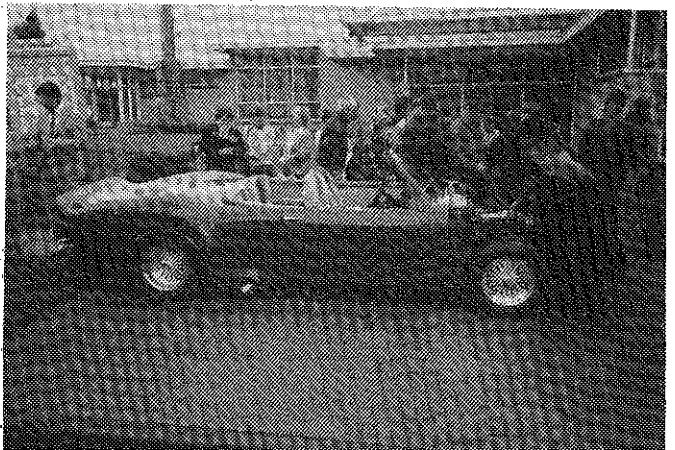
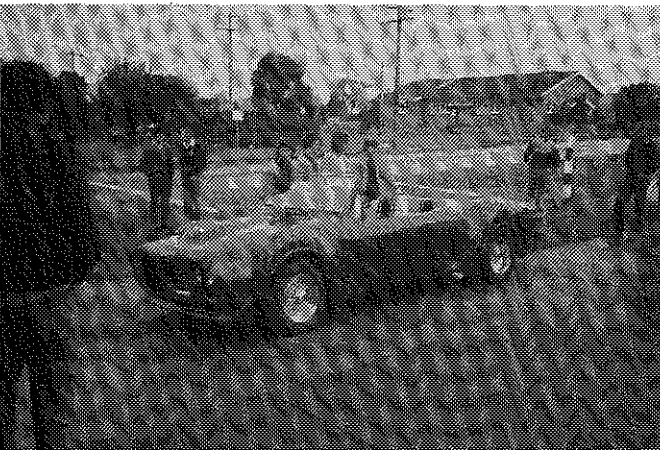
The strongest indication of this is the inclusion of other family members in the final trip. They weren't there just to make up the numbers or to keep the kids in line or get a cheap trip to the States; the two mums, two dads, one grandfather and one sister were truly representative of all of the parents and families of all of the students who, I am sure if money, time and other commitments would have allowed, would also have deserved to go along.

To bring us back to the rhetoric level, however, these parents are not, as yet, involved in the 'official' channels of parent 'participation'. And they have had a valuable lesson in school politics also - the comment in regard to the school was something along these lines: "Well, there hasn't been too much encouragement and there is a feeling that everyone isn't as encouraging as they should be." One can only hope that from such important and relevant participation in their children's schooling, that these parents will have set a trend and extend their involvement to other levels of the school's operation. It's a pity it's a matter of hope!

The broader school community has also been actively tapped and involved in this project. The last time I visited the school, the students were furiously writing 'thank you' notes to a whole blackboard-full of local traders, from car wreckers to clothing stores. A fine tribute to that community involvement was made by the students in a gesture of heartfelt gratitude. The students decided that they wanted to 'unveil' the final product, a shining red Studebaker sports-car, at the local Shire Hall. When asked why, they told me it was because the community had helped them so much and if it had been done at the school, they felt it wouldn't have involved the community enough.

As you may have gathered by now, I cannot speak highly enough of the students, their parents and the teacher (and his wife) who have provided for all of us to learn from, a perfect educational experience. And you learn a lot more when you come home to find you have still failed Compensatory English!

*Barbara Allen,  
State Program Support Team,  
TEAC.*



*The great Studebaker unveiling ceremony*

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## INTERVIEW 1: Merv Edmunds

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Barbara Allen, as the previous article indicates, has been involved with this project for some time. Connect has on two previous occasions reported on the developments of "Youthcraft" - a student cooperative - and the building of the fibreglass sportscar to finance a trip to the USA in October last year.

The group left Australia on October 18th, returning on November 9th after a trip that took in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Denver, Cheyenne, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon and Santa Cruz. They stayed with or visited Cheyenne High schools near Denver, with the Metropolitan Learning Centre (a K-12 school) in Portland, Harbor High School in Santa Cruz and Bensen Polytechnic in Portland.



Connect recently spoke to Merv Edmunds, and extracts from that interview are included here:

"Yes, I am familiar with what Barbara wrote. She has been a great help really - interviewed the kids for a television segment and the kids used to get a real boost when she remarked at how much progress had been made since her last visit.

*Did the kids need a boost?*

Yes, we all did. The project was much more involved than any of us realised. And the continual knocking upset the kids. You see, we built that car in a covered walk-through and were subject to every passer-by's opinion. And much of it didn't help the kids in believing it was possible.

*Was it some of that 'knocking' that made the kids even more determined?*

Yes, definitely. I borrowed some "How to Succeed" tapes and played them to the kids and they were a stunning success. They memorised parts and one of the quotations they wrote in big letters and stuck it to the wall: "The Best Revenge is Massive Success". I will never forget them, sitting back in their seats on that jumbo jet: "Such and such, eat your heart out!"

*You sent me a copy of your attempt to get some fare concessions for the students. Were you successful?*

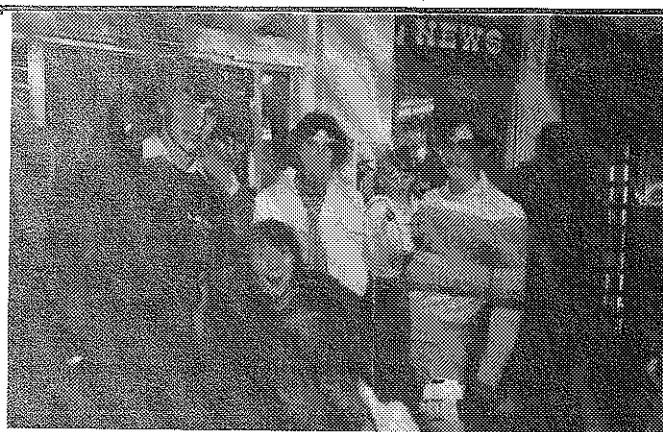
No. The students paid adult fare. We used the argument that if they were American students, then Qantas would carry them both ways across the Pacific for \$6000 less - so why not Australian kids? The kids wrote to several ministers and, without exception, they replied, commended them on their project and did what they could. We flew Air New Zealand.

*How was the trip organised - like accommodation, land travel and meals in the States?*

We had a detailed itinerary that filled in the time between billets. The few nights required were booked over there. Travel was by Greyhound bus and the service was excellent. We mostly had a bus to ourselves following the scheduled one and when other passengers boarded they soon got asking questions. The kids loved it and learned so much from that cross-section of travelling Americans.



*At Cobden Technical School:  
Students talking with Joe Campbell,  
Cheyenne, (Wyoming) cowboy.*



*Cheyenne: L to R: Darren Hustwayte,  
Greg McKenzie, Bev Campbell, Jocelyn  
and Joe Campbell. Front: Robert  
Richardson.*

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*And what about the billeting arrangements: were they satisfactory?*

They certainly were. To me, the most rewarding aspect of the whole trip was to see 15 apprehensive kids disappear with strangers and return several days later, all beaming and obviously so much part of that family. The hospitality and the lengths people went to to give us a good time was quite simply unbelievable.

*Did your students attend classes with their hosts?*

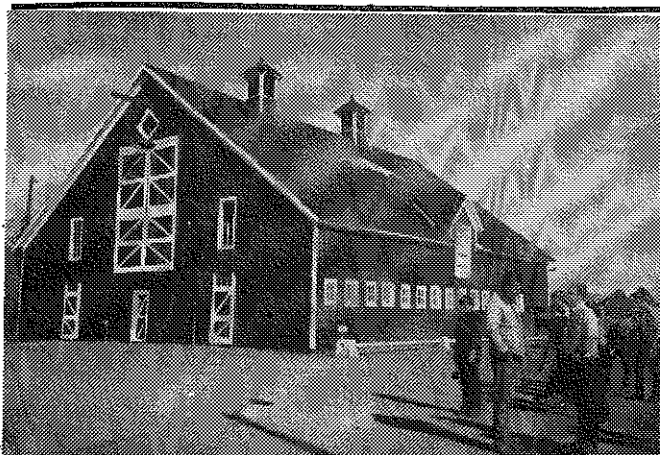
In most cases, yes. The four schools we visited were all very different but it gave us all a better understanding of their pattern of schooling. Sport was the most common link. They were fascinated watching our kids kick the footy. Sport and video games and of course parties, with plenty of music - they were all common interests.

*Did you have any behaviour problems?*

None whatever - hard to believe, maybe, but it's true. Mind you, it wasn't a random group from all classes. Those kids had worked with each other, many for nearly two years, on making it possible. All the sorting-out with each other and with Robin and myself had taken place before the trip. And it obviously meant so much to them, they didn't want to mess it up in any way.

*And how did the parents enjoy the trip?*

Really they were a pleasure to be with. They had all paid full fare, but they viewed the whole thing as though they had won it out of a hat. They took notes of what they heard, photos of what they saw and obviously fitted in where they were billeted. Travel is like that, though. It always seems too expensive but with a good enough reason and the opportunity, it soon becomes money well spent. It was sad leaving several parents who had worked very hard with us on the sportscar. But it was obvious they were pleased to do it for their son's or daughter's sake.



*Visit to Wyoming Hereford Ranch,  
Cheyenne, Wyoming.*



*Leaving Cheyenne:  
Some of the group with Joe Campbell (front left).*

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*Would you undertake a similar project again?*

I don't think I would do an identical project. It really was a massive undertaking. The building of the sportscar was a two-year project in itself, and it would not be difficult to interest another group of kids in that aspect. It is a winner! And yet I would like to spend two years just working towards another trip. Do you know, the car and its sale became almost incidental to the trip taking place? The group of parents became so committed to it taking place that they were prepared to pay. So someday I would like to plan either aspect and do it again.

*Is that 'youth participation' when, in a sense, you decide what is going to happen and make it happen?*

Maybe it's not. I don't know. The most difficult stage as I see it in any project is getting it going. Too many times, a teacher thinks that the kids are going to plan their work and make the decisions and wonder why it takes them so long to get going. Leadership is an integral part of participation, just as it is with any collective human endeavour. Get the project underway, the direction set and the goal in everybody's mind and then it's like a four-wheel drive: mostly you can manage without it, but for rocky patches and lots of mud, having it may make the difference between getting bogged down or continuing.

*Barbara mentions the parents participating. How did they get involved?*

I guess when their child talks about nothing else about school but the project, they are being involved. Don't underestimate what it means to parents to see their 15-16-17 year old so fired up in a productive and worthwhile thing. So involvement and agreement; participation follows: "Mum said to tell you that she would be quite happy to handle all the passport arrangements." You can imagine how much I appreciated that and I told her so. Little did she realise what a hassle it was to become. Do you know, she did the dealings in person, drove home to have someone's form corrected and drove back to Melbourne the next day? They had undertaken to do it and were determined to do it right.

I have seen parents involved in the traditional roles and at curriculum discussion level too, but I must say I have some reservation - but to see them contribute in a capacity that they were happy in and needed in was an experience I'll not forget.

*And what do you say about the community involvement?*

The project was well publicised and in offering their services or supplying items, they were glad to contribute in some way. The final finishing and painting was a big job. The local panel shop employed six of the group to help work on the car as work experience - let us work on it after hours. When completed, the manager took the lads to lunch, he was so proud of their effort. Then donated a bus trip to Ballarat so that all the group could appear on television with the car.

*In brief, Merv, what were the essential elements, or the factors which ensured the project's success?*

I think the most important is the structure which provides for students spending a lot of time with a teacher. You see, I had those kids for Group Unit, one hour each day plus 4 hours of project time - which meant 9 hours minimum each week. That's a good opportunity for the kids to get into something that interests them and that they think is worth doing and for a project of this nature, it is essential.

*Interview with: Merv Edmunds,  
Cobden Technical School,  
Cobden 3266*



*Our students with three students from Benson PC: L to R: Tracey Bond, Gayle Halden, Barry Mackay, Robert Richardson.*



*Barry Mackay presenting football to Metropolitan Learning Centre Principal, Cloudy Beyer.*

Other background articles on Cobden Technical School's YOUTHCRAFT and Studebaker projects can be found in CONNECTs 17 and 20.

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**Now mail this form to 3CR, 20 Cromwell St, Collingwood 3066.**

The following pages provide a photo-essay on the development of the Studebaker project.

Photos are provided by Merv Edmunds.

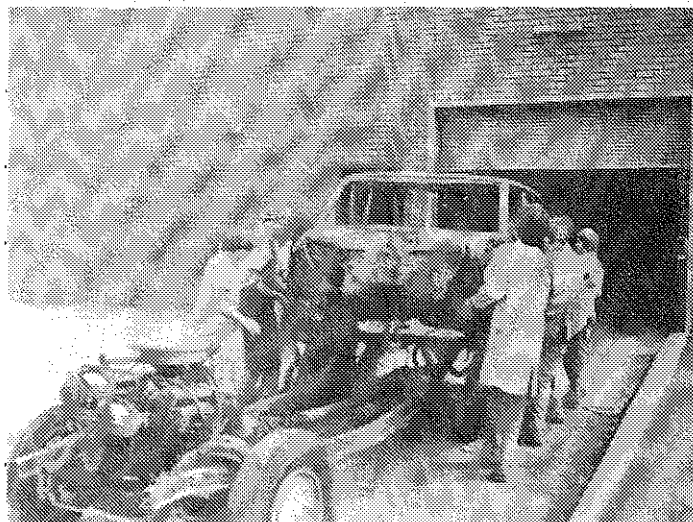


# The Studebaker Project

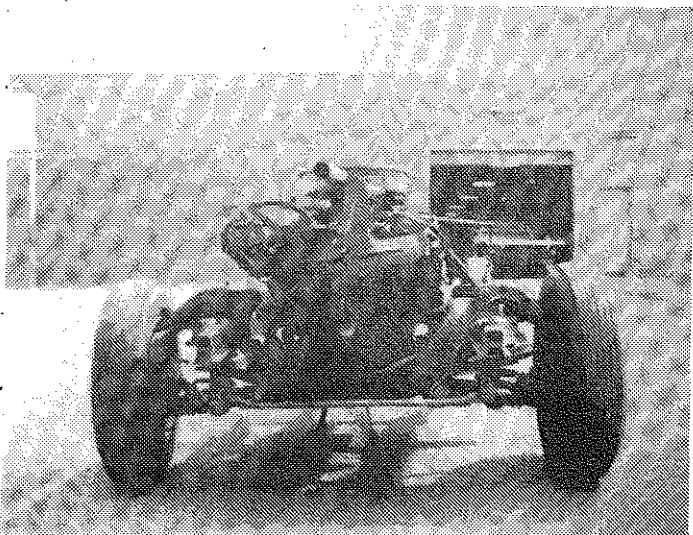
1. In the beginning: fresh from several laps of the oval! The 1966 Studebaker Sedan, as purchased by the students in February 1982 for \$250.



2. The body in the process of being removed. Note how the entire body shell is separated from the full frame chassis. Parts of this shell, the firewall, floor pan and rear window have all been used in the roadster body.

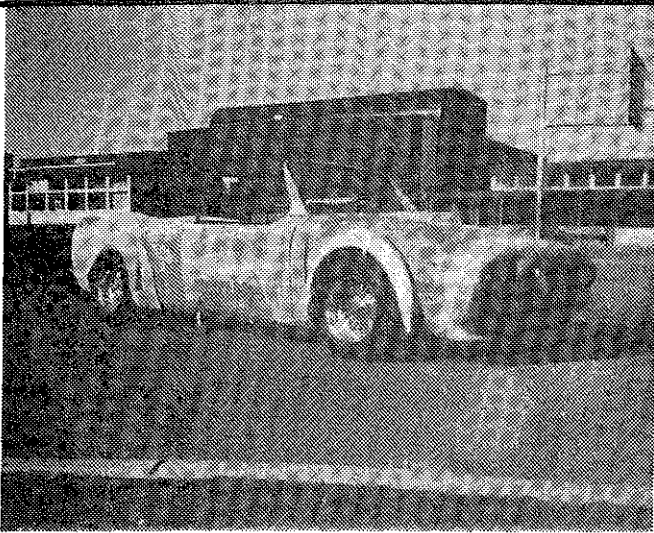


3. The heart of the matter ... a big 283 V8 up front! The engine was removed and all chassis parts cleaned and painted. Springs in the front had to be re-set to compensate for the lightweight body being built.

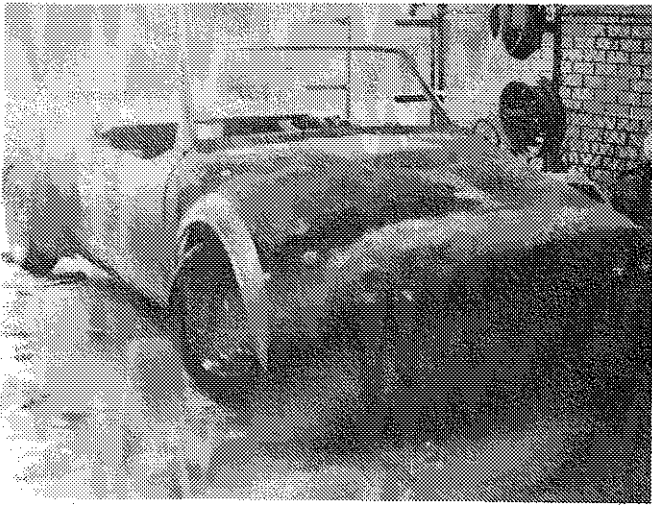


4. The prize, the winner and the contestants at Ballarat BTV6 studio in July 1982. The tool Kit was donated by Repco Auto Parts. Ross Howard is currently working in a surf board shop in Torquay.

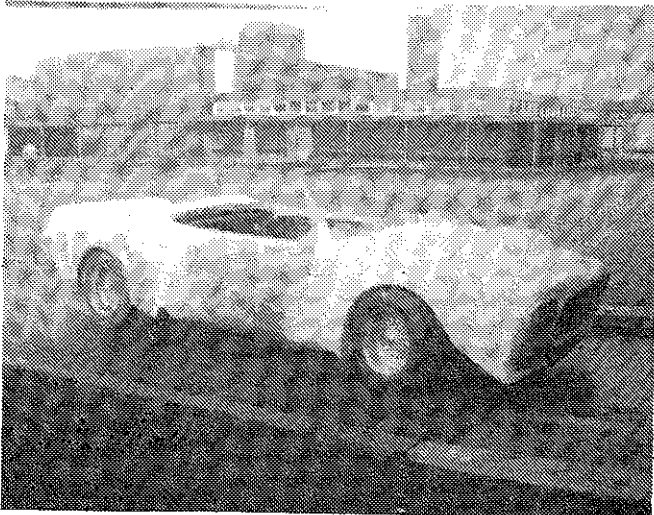




5. The outline of the roadster can be seen in this shot. Styling is about 1960s - "classic flowing lines with a lean and hungry look."



6. The process as at May 1983. Wheels were supplied by Delta (Mullins Wheels) and tyres by Goodyear (B & S Discount Tyres, Camperdown). The airscoop has now been modified and much of the rear portion fibreglassed.

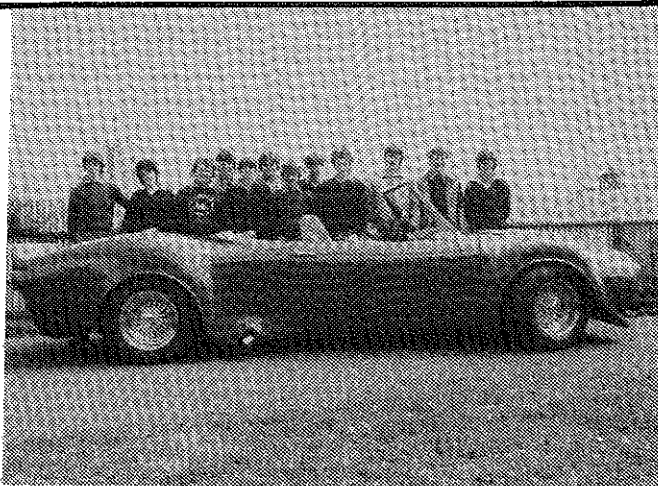


7. Fibreglass work completed. Now for a final sand, ready to be painted at Prossers Motor Body Works, Camperdown.



8. After six days of sanding and painting, it emerges: a beautiful red - stunning - superb!

9. The team with the car: the culmination of two years' work. Now off to the USA on the proceeds of the sale of the car. Sad to see it go, but glad for the opportunity of "the trip of a lifetime".  
 L to R: Sean Halley, Gayle Halden, Brian Neale, Stephen Webb, Robert Richardson, Darren Bond, Darren Turner, Greg McKenzie, Barry Mackay, Stuart Laurie, Darren Hustwayte, Robert Horsted.  
 Absent: Andrew Chivell



10. The car: "Look at it closely, study the superb lines, the masterly way it comes together as an entire vehicle, the 'rightness' of design." Wayne Gregson, A Place in the Sun.  
L to R: Sean Halley, Barry Mackay, Gayle Halden, Andrew Chivell.



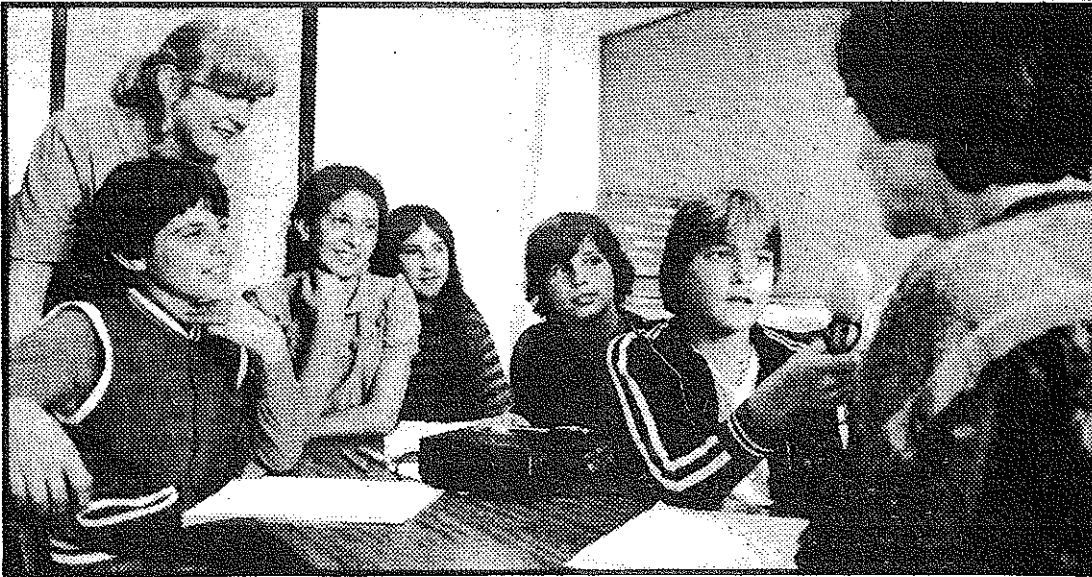
11. At Benson Polytechnical College (morning visit there).  
L to R:  
Back: Ross Howard, Stuart Laurie, Sean Halley, Andrew Chivell, Stephen Webb, Greg McKenzie, Robert Horsted, Mervyn Edmunds.  
Front: Barry Mackay, Gayle Halden, Brian Neale, Robert Richardson, Tracey Bond, Robyn Edmunds.  
L Front: Darren Turner.  
Absent: Darren Bond, Darren Hustwayte.



12. At Benson P.C.  
L to R: Instructor, Darren Turner, Barry Mackay, Stuart Laurie, Andrew Chivell, Greg McKenzie.







Ascolta project officer Rebecca Coyle supervises the interview with Jill Morris by Brunswick East primary school students.

## Grade Sixers learn the interview game

**C**page  
Jill Morris

CARLA, Katina, George, Michael and Dominic are still in primary school but already they are accomplished radio interviewers.

Grade six students at Brunswick East Primary, this impressive team has spent a weekly session throughout this term working on a radio program about the Media for Ascolta (6 pm Saturdays on 3CR).\*

Last week they invited me to the school for a recorded interview. In a small upstairs room, they set up their Superscope tape recorder, held out a professional buffer-covered microphone and charged through a barrage of more than 50 questions: about the C page, the Green Guide, commercials, children's program selection, everything.

Weak answers were greeted with further follow-up questions. When I gave the right answer, the interrogators nodded wisely, passed the microphone to the next speaker — and moved on to other topics.

Research, preparation, professionalism and teamwork were evident in this group, who have been working all term with Ascolta Radio group project officer Rebecca Coyle, a trained teacher who is employed half-time to do radio work in a number of Brunswick district schools.

Suspense was in the air as Katina asked

George (who at that moment was acting as recording technician): "Are you ready?"

With the concentration of a station operator about to switch a program on to the airwaves, George nodded: "Ready."

Katina's hand waved, a tiny gesture, meaning "Switch on". George pressed the Pause button on the recorder and we were away.

No stumbling over the questions or answers here. This was no game. It was serious, investigative journalism and the questions were as curly as any I've ever been asked.

George, Katina and the rest of the team will edit our long interview in a pre-recording studio at Moreland High School, a facility which they share with media students from a number of other schools.

It will be only one segment of a 30-minute program which the students will submit to the Ascolta group for the regular Saturday time-slot.

The senior teacher at Brunswick East, Mary Kadyra, has acted as encourager and school contact for the Ascolta project and Grade Six teacher Shelley Yourn is very much in favor of the students' investigative radio work.

"I didn't even know how to work the tape recorder until the children showed me," Mrs Yourn said.

## FRIENDS OF Y.P.

We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following contributions since last issue:

PATRON SUBSCRIBER (\$20 pa):

James Oakes (Wodonga, Vic)  
Adrian Stephens (Ivanhoe, Vic)  
Ray Davis (Preston, Vic)  
Jim Williamson (West Brunswick, Vic)  
Mervyn Edmunds (Cobden, Vic)  
Leonie Ebert (North Adelaide, SA)  
Olga Kimpton (North Carlton, Vic)

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## INTERVIEW 2: Charles Kingston

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# STUDENT GOVERNMENT: WEST WYALONG HIGH

## WW, RASG & NASC

Charles Kingston is a teacher at West Wyalong High School in New South Wales. He is the co-author of "The Hitch-hiker's Guide to Student Government" and has been integrally involved with the establishment of the Regional Association of Student Governments. When Charles visited Connect recently, we took the opportunity to interview him on 3CR:

*Charles, perhaps we can start by talking about West Wyalong High School; can you describe the school for a start?*

The school's in what's called the Western Region of NSW, 300 miles west of Sydney. Reasonably small - by your Victorian standards (365/370 students), goes from Year 7 to Year 12, so we've got a 6 year range. And its closest large school is 70 miles away, so we have a problem of distance.

*So it's drawing kids from a small town?*

From a small town of about 4,000 and then it draws kids from the general farming area around there.

*How did the Student Government Project at West Wyalong get started?*

There has been a Student Council at West Wyalong since 1973. There was a rash of Student Councils established at that time at various schools there. The oldest was actually at Kinnopolis in Orange High, in Orange. And the project of making it a student government came from some Year 10 students in 1977, who faced the prospect of taking over things like the Social Committee which was already established, a Magazine Committee - all these sort of things that were the field for Year 11.

And they looked at it, and they said - 'we don't know what we're going to do next year, besides taking up senior school, we're expected to do all of these types of activities'. They approached a Science teacher there by the name of Les Vozzo (a friend of mine), and he took it from there, working with those students, suggesting some ideas. They then took about 6 months of their Year 11 period to look at a committee structure, to suggest projects that they might do, and they were very much into doing things that they could do that very year. They weren't looking forward.

A lot of them have talked to us since and said, 'I'm amazed at how far it's gone since'. They wanted an activity that they could see accomplished within that year because they knew once they got into Year 12 that they would have too many pressures on them to do any more activities.

And from that, we then turned it into a Student Government. By "we" I mean those students, the students that succeeded them, Les Vozzo and myself, basically working for the first 3 or 4 years.

The reason for changing the name from what was known as a "Student Council" to "Student Government" was quite simply to change the image.



What was the change? Is the Student Council different from the Student Government?

We see it as different. There is within our structure, that took about 2 years to develop into its present form, a Council as part of the Student Government. Now the Council consists of those representatives from all the classes who are elected, at annual elections. But the Student Government can include anybody in the school. And one of the on-going problems that we face, is making sure that people understand that.

Even this year, we had students coming up to us, and saying 'well, I didn't get elected', and they really wanted to get involved. And how can they get involved? The very fact that they're asking the question, 'how can I get involved?' is important, because they realise maybe there's some other alternative.

And the last 2 years have shown that those students who do not get elected, realise there are committees which they can work on. Or take on secretarial positions on everything from an Office Committee (which is just elected within the Student Council) to the 6 major committees, which are part of the structure: publicity, school improvement, community involvement, cultural and so on.

And more and more, students are beginning to realise that there's much more to carrying out activities at the schools than just being elected as a representative.

What sort of things does the Student Government do? What sorts of things does it do within the school?

It's varied. It's had a varied history. In the early days, by that I mean 6½ years ago, the projects were very visible. They (students) constructed a bulletin board. They constructed some spectator stands. Raised the funds for it, and then had them constructed. They had organised, with one of the parents, to get a barbecue for the school.

Then, the next stage, I would say, the more image raising, spirit raising things: getting clothing items if you like (sporting equipment, and windcheaters, and then T-shirts) all with logos of the school on them. And that was totally a Student Government Project.

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It was useful, in that it raised money, which they hadn't had before then. It was even more useful in that it could be looked at, and people told, 'the Student Government got that for you', and could be seen in the town. That really was the visible, objective stage of it.

Since then, the other areas became more and more important. There was a time when a number of students elected by their peers, not just the representatives, but others who were interested - sat down on a Code of Behaviour Committee, with teachers and parents, to hash out a set of rules for the school.

We have had a few kids sitting on various types of Curriculum Committees or Pupil Welfare Committees. That stage is still growing. It's not really as large an involvement in curriculum measures as we would like, or as the current Principal would like. We've had a change of Principals since we started the thing, and the new Principal has actually said to us and the students, 'look, there are other things that you could be doing that you haven't thought of'. And so in that sense it's come a long way in the last 6 years, from the purely concrete, visual accomplishments, to more tangible but probably more important things.

*It's often hard for kids to perceive that they can get involved in curriculum. The current myth is - that's the teacher's responsibility. We're not going to get into that.*

Exactly. And to realise that their views are sought, and that there are some very positive things that they can contribute to that, is an important realisation on their part. It takes a long time for that to happen.

Another development that I think is quite important when you're looking at a school that has a wide range of ages - from age 12 to age 18 even - is the realisation on the part of the younger students that they do have some power, or some say in what goes on.

Traditionally, as I said, the Student Council was a Year 11 thing. Along with the school magazine, along with a few other activities that went on. Gradually, over the years, the Student Government process has, through training the students from the moment they get into the school, they do part of the curriculum (we have an open space program there) and for a whole term those Year 7 students, for three 40-minute periods a week, study Student Government, and what it involves.

So they're hit with it from the very beginning. And told, and do activity projects and skills development projects, which hopefully get some of them anyway, into that way of thinking: "Look, we are here to do something besides just take our normal courses, it's part and parcel of the curriculum and we can do something."

Now, it doesn't happen overnight. Year 7 students and some Year 8 students are still basically primary age, and their interests are not necessarily the interests of the Year 10's and 11's, but some significant accomplishments initiated by Student Government have given that sense of responsibility to the younger students as time went on.

For instance, a separate quadrangle for Year 10, which has created an identity for them. We have had students go away to various Statewide Projects, and come back very enthusiastic about what they've got, realising that they have more control than perhaps some of the other schools that they've talked to, and therefore they do get more involved.

And last year for the first time, I can say in a very real sense, that they were Year 9's who said, 'look, it's our responsibility to carry out this project'. So instead of just a small core, and in that school you've always got a fairly small senior school, and a small core of Year 11's who do all the work, and are expected to carry all the load of responsibility, you've got Year 11's willing and able to call upon Year 9's, and maybe in the future, Year 8's and Year 7's. And say, 'this activity is yours, and I'll expect it done within the next two weeks, and come back to me if you have any problems'; the Committee Chairpeople are Year 11's - sure; but hopefully by the time they get up to that stage, they will have gone through all those steps, and they themselves don't have to butter the bread for the barbecue, if it's a lunch time barbecue; they delegate to the younger students. And the younger students are quite happy to do it because that's the level of involvement that they're ready for at that stage.

*The Year 7 students having time in class - is that general through the school? Do the Year 11's for example, who are involved, have it recognised as being a curriculum activity?*

It is now for Year 11's. We've actually got a Leadership class, which is a three period a week, one unit course; it's a one year course

too. It doesn't carry on to Year 12. But that was established as part the Schools Commission Project, to set up a regional association, that West Wyalong undertook in 1981, and one of the last steps in that was getting a Group Studies Course for Year 11, and that's now in its third year. And fairly successful. The numbers have varied from about 5 in it the first year, and had 14 in it last year, which is a good number to work with. Now, not all of those kids are Committee Chairpeople or elected representatives, they're just students who felt an interest, they'd been involved before, or wanted to get involved, and wanted the extra time and the extra skills development that they could get from an actual course.

The most significant thing about that is it's a recognition, not only by the school, but by the Department of Education. It's a worthwhile course to pursue, and they get credit for it. Now that also provides time of course, the essential element of time for the teacher involved, to work at Student Government activities. Before that, it was always done at lunch times, or on his own time, and of course 3 periods a week is not adequate; you need it as a full time job, but until such time as that comes, this is the step in that direction.



## 2. RASG

*You mentioned a little while ago, Charles, about the RASG. Can you please explain what that is, for a start?*

RASG (colloquially known as RASG) is the Regional Association of Student Government. In 1980, we at West Wyalong took students to Youth Forum, which is a NSW project started in 1979, and you've probably talked about Youth Forum before I would imagine. At Youth Forum there were Schools Commission people. They liked the presentation that our students put on about Student Government at West Wyalong High School. They suggested that it was an idea that other schools could learn from, and we were really novices in the game of spreading the word, as it might be, to other schools. But the opportunity was there. They in fact said, 'look, we are looking for grant applications from students'.

So we took it from there, went back to the school, talked to some of the interested students who had either been at Youth Forum or had helped out in preparing that presentation. And said, 'what can we do?'. Being West Wyalong, a small community, reasonably isolated, taking on a Statewide Association (which is ultimately what we'd like to see happen, or even a National Association) is too big a project for us. So let's take it back to the regional level. Which we did. We applied for the grant, and received I think \$7,500 to carry out what was to be a 2 year project, to set up a Regional Association, just in the Western Region of NSW.

And we condensed that to a year's project. It was established in November 1981 at a camp at Lake Burrendong Recreation Centre. There were about 135/140 students who attended that camp from 21 schools. It formally began the Regional Association of Student Government.

And then in the following year, the committee, to carry on the work of RASG was centred around the Dubbo schools (there are 3 high schools in Dubbo), and they did a joint project to hammer out a constitution, to get out the first newsletters for the organisation, and to set up another camp.

Basically the three things that RASG has concentrated on in its three year existence have been: an annual camp, where you deal with leadership skills specifically in the area of Student Councils within government schools really; and newsletters to continue to spread the word, and to help out people.

who think they're working in isolation; and then of course, fund raising, to support all of those.

And it hasn't really gotten beyond that stage yet, although there are suggestions that this year it might go further.

Last year the committee was Bathurst High School, which was the RASG committee, and this year it's at Kelso which is also in Bathurst. So it's now in the stage where in its fourth year of existence, four high schools have been intimately involved in carrying out its activities.

There are several aims stated in the constitution, but put succinctly, the aim is to develop Student Councils in schools where they don't exist, and to give as much aid as possible, and support and encouragement to schools that have Councils that are drifting. And there's a lot more of those I think than schools that don't have them - places where nothing has really happened, it's got a very apathetic image and therefore it's really hard to bring those back up; and they need that kind of support.

*It seems that there are fairly active Student Councils within schools - or Student Governments within schools throughout the Region. Is that true and is it typical of the rest of NSW?*

I think it's mixed. What's happened in the last 4 years, because of the RASG project, and because of very vocal support from the Regional Director up there (now retired - Doug Rickard) and some other teachers, and organisations like Youth Forum, it appears as if Western Region has the best Student Councils in NSW. I don't personally believe that's true. I just think it's gotten more publicity. There is no other regional association to our knowledge. And we tried (throughout 1981) to find out what else was going, and did find that there was much going on. I just think that there's a lot of people doing things who just haven't been publicised.

*And who may not be tied into that sort of structure which goes beyond a school?*

Exactly. They're out there. How we go about finding them is partly what Connect's on about and partly what we're on about with RASG.

*What sorts of difficulties are there with RASG? You're spread over an enormous area, and I can imagine that poses some problems.*

Except for cities like Dubbo and Bathurst, where you have several high schools in the same city, all the other high schools in the Western Region are in isolated towns: towns that are anywhere from 40 to 200 kilometres away from their nearest high school. And that's just the problem of distance - of getting students and teachers to places to have conferences and meetings and whatnot.

Which is why, rather than looking at regular meetings, say monthly or bi-monthly, the RASG groups have decided to concentrate on a big annual camp. And carry out everything else - all the publicity, fund raising and so forth - through one committee centred in one school. It seemed the easiest way to go about it at the time. Given greater funding, more support say from administration circles and some permanently employed people at the top to carry out on-going activities, it might be possible to bridge some of those distance gaps. But at present it isn't. It's basically a rural regional association.



### 3. Off to America 1985?

*Charles, you've also built the Regional Association of Student Governments into an international context through contacts and connections with a similar organisation in the United States. Could you talk a little bit about that?*

The organisation in the United States is a national association - National Association of Student Councils. It is directly tied in with, and in fact it's a subsidiary of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, so they have the 'approval' of administrators of schools in the United States. It's been going for more than 50 years now. And the United States of course being a much bigger country, NASC has some 27,000 schools that belong to it.

We were fortunate enough (in the early days of developing student government at West Wyalong) to get into contact with people at NASC, and they sent us quite a bit of their material which helped us along in providing local workshops, and skills development courses and so on.

When RASG was established in 1981, we then took that further. Instead of writing as a teacher/advisor at West Wyalong high school, we had the kids on the RASG committee write to NASC; and say, 'we now have an association here. We're in the early days - how can you help us?' And the response was very gratifying from NASC. In addition to sending a lot of written material, they subsequently allowed me (when I was away on leave in 1982) to visit their National Conference, which is on once a year, usually in June; some of their leadership camps, and to talk to a lot of people over there who have had a long history of dealing with Student Councils.

Subsequent to that, it was decided that it would be beneficial to both organisations - for RASG and NASC - to become international affiliates. To the best of my knowledge they don't have this kind of relationship with any other group in the world. But basically what it means is that, all the publications that NASC comes out with, and most specifically their regular magazine called "The Student Advocate", which is published 9 times a year - is sent to any member of the RASG organisation: any schools who belong to it. And we hope that this will lead in time to regular exchanges. In fact at the moment we're looking very seriously at a trip to the United States for some Australian student leaders for International Youth Year. And that has the strong approval of NASC.

*What sort of things are hoped for with that?*

Ideally, we'd be able to get students from all over the country. At the moment, in connection with you, Roger, are looking at dealing with it as a national project. From the standpoint of RASG, we're mainly interested in its impact upon Student Councils. A trip of that nature provides a strong incentive for students who have either been involved previously, or like to get involved, can say, 'here's something I can really get excited about. I may or may not be the one going, but at least I can take part in a new initiative'. And we've found a great deal of interest amongst students in Western Region in that regard.

Once they get there, they would be seeing students who have active (very active) Student Councils in their own schools; and have access to people who are used to dealing with associations who have had a long history of dealing with the problems that Student Councils have. I think on the basis of personally experiencing some of those camps, they'll get terribly enthused, and come back and say, 'we can do this over here'.

Sure, a lot of the methods, a lot of the projects that go on in the United States don't have a direct application in Australia, because the system is different. We don't have grid-iron football games, and therefore we don't have those kind of pep rallies and so on. They work for United States schools, they wouldn't work over here. But we can adapt that kind of situation, and say, there's another way in which we can create school spirit. And I think, if we send enough students over (and that's where the idea of making it a national project is very appealing) the impact when they come back, on not just Regional Association of Student Government, or *Connect*, or anything else that's going on in the Victorian or South Australian States, but generally on schools that these kids go back to, could be very great.

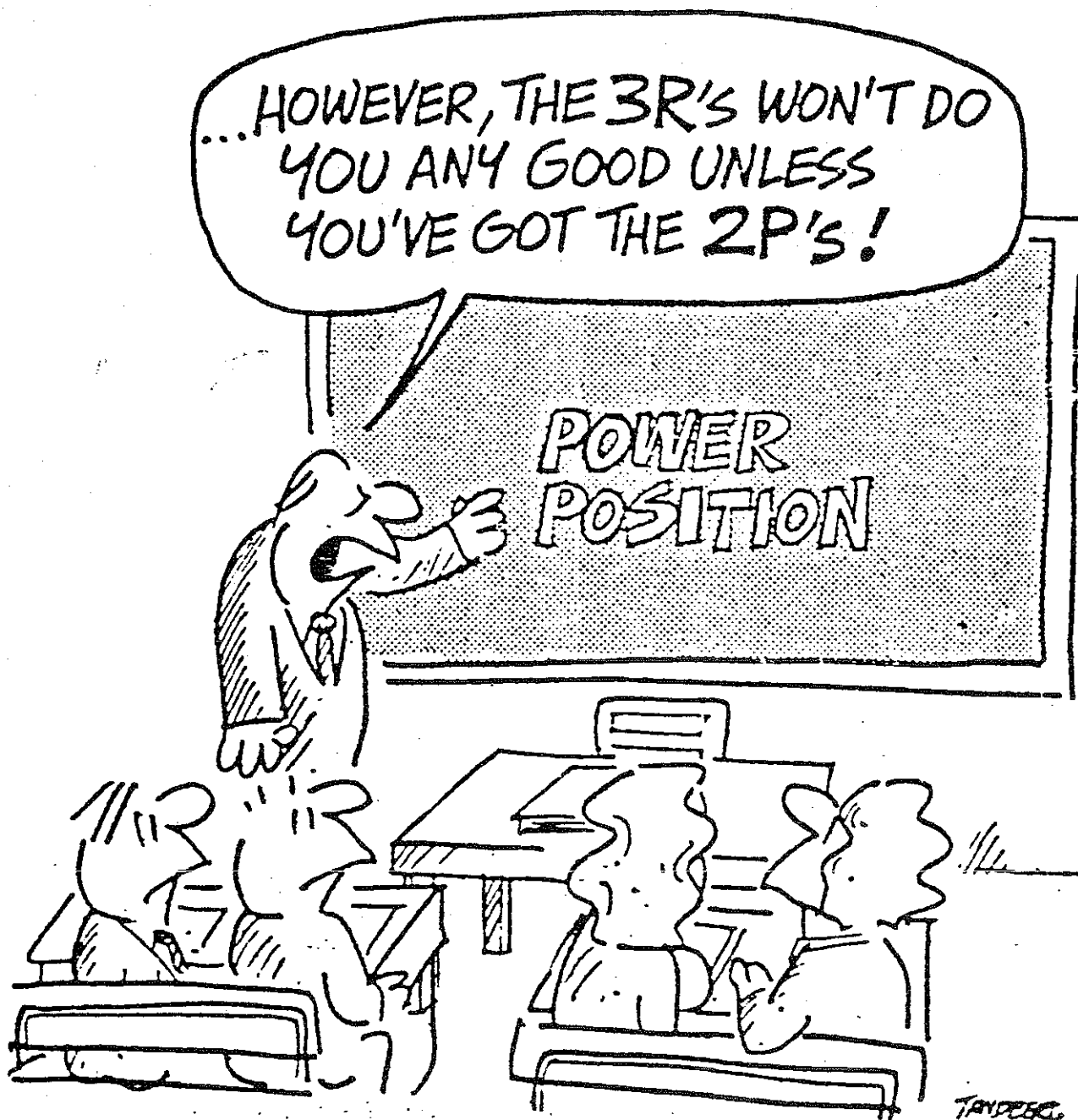


We've had a similar development with our students at West Wyalong and some of the other schools who've said the same thing; who've been able to go to Youth Forum in NSW, or gone to a RASG camp. A classic example is a student who is not exactly apathetic, but kind of cynical about the whole thing (from our school last year - she was only Year 8 - very vocal) and when she returned from a 3-day RASG camp (it was a weekend camp only) her first words were, 'now I understand why we thought you people were all mad, because I'm mad now too, and I don't care what people think'. And they were going around giving out roses to people and 'warm fuzzies' (which are simply nice hugs) saying, 'I really like you, and we really had a good time'. There's much more substantive things that come from that, but that enthusiasm is a starting point. And this kind of trip, I think, would make that possible.

And moreover, if we're dealing with international youth here, we're dealing here with organisations that have already been working in that field of youth participation, and therefore they're the ones I think that need to go further. And really make an impact.

If people want to find out more about what you're doing at West Wyalong, and with RASG - can you give people a contact address?

The RASG Committee, they could write care of Kelso High School, in Bathurst. And that would get to them. If they want to find out more about what RASG is doing relative to the IYY project, or more about NASC, they could write to me, Charles Kingston at West Wyalong High School, in NSW, postcode 2671.



# STUDENT ACTION IN EDUCATION

## PILOT PROJECT REPORT

The following report of the Student Action in Education Project, based at the Western Region Education Centre (34 Kingsville St., West Footscray 3012 - (03) 314.3011) and supported by funds from the Transition Education Advisory Committee, was produced at the end of the Pilot Project stage late in 1983. The full project report, including a section on the work done in the pilot project and appendices, is available from WREC. The following is necessarily an abbreviated version of the whole report:

### INTRODUCTION

The Student Action Project has now been in operation for one term (to the end of 1983). The project, funded by the Transition Education Advisory Committee and directed by a Project Committee made up of teachers and students, is based at the Western Region Education Centre.

I was employed and began work in September, and established contacts, resources and plans for 1984. Funding from TEAC has been assured for 1984 and consequently a second project officer Barry Hancock has been appointed to work with me in 1984.

The Student Action pilot project commenced with a strong background of previous activity related to Student Participation in this Region. A Forum Day: "Our Rights? Our Schools? Our Future?" held in August at WREC, initiated much enthusiasm for student participation in students and teachers alike. The Student Working Party organised through the Supplementary Grants Program had established a regular forum for students and teachers to tackle issues related to student participation. A regional Office initiated 'Support Group' had begun work on three position papers directed towards students, teachers and administrators regarding issues and problems related to student participation in the context of the Ministerial Papers.

### OUTLINE OF WORK DONE

The main areas of work covered during the Pilot Project have been in:

- a) introducing the project to Student Councils, teachers, administrators and student action projects throughout the region ...
- b) setting up administrative frameworks ...
- c) organising publicity ...
- d) establishing links with Regional and State organisations ...
- e) beginning a resource library ...
- f) organising regional events ...
  - i) TEAC Video Day ...
  - ii) International Youth Year 1985 Forum Day ...

(abbreviated text)

### A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Much of the focus of my work this term has been on Student Councils. It is important within the context of the recent Ministerial Papers that Student Councils are operating effectively. Students going onto School Councils in 1984, need to be representative of a total student body.. Student Councils can provide both a representative structure and a support system for School Council members. It is important, though, that the project in 1984 encompasses both the formal student participation structures of SRCs and the less formal student participation areas of curriculum alternatives and Student Action Projects.

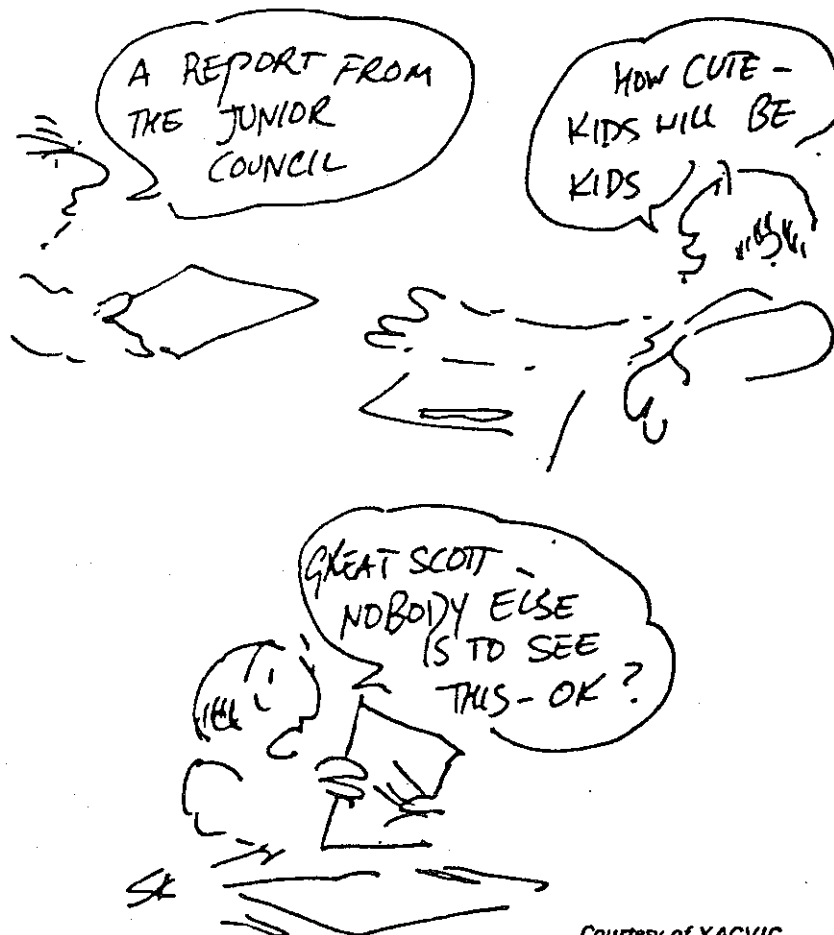
## STUDENT COUNCILS

### A. Development

The existence of active Student Councils throughout the region is moving at a varied rate. Many schools are setting up Student Councils for either the first time or after a long period of inactivity. This process is a long one, needing support internally and externally. Many of these groups are starting with a 'planning group' of students and one supporting teacher. This allows some time to incite interest in the student body and to consider ways such a group could be organised and the types of issues the group might want to approach.

In some schools, Student Councils have been operating for some time, but are facing problems in arousing interest and support from the school community. These Councils are working with small numbers of students and are having difficulty in tackling issues or achieving aims.

There are several Student Councils throughout the region that have succeeded in establishing an active working presence in their schools. These Councils have been operating for some time and have generally succeeded in tackling several major issues and/or activities during the year. It should be noted that these Councils generally have strong support from administration and teachers within their schools.



Courtesy of YACVIC.

### B. Problems in Relation to School Councils

There are many problems emerging in either the setting up or continuation of Student Councils. Student Councils ideally should represent in a real way the whole student body. To affect or be a part of school based decisions, Student Councils need representation on school decision making committees as well as School Councils.

The central problem it seems in the development of Student Councils, is lack of recognition of such a group in the school community. This lack of recognition is indicated in a shortage of time allocation for students involved, a minimum amount of teacher and administration active support, a lack of know-

ledge in the general school community of the purpose for such a group, lack of personal recognition for student input and problems with access to travel, the broader community, other students, information and skill development.

Student Councils are still generally viewed as an extra school activity. This means that only those students or teachers interested are in contact with the potential and achievements of such a group. Even in situations where students are given time to meet and support from internal structures, total school involvement is still lacking.

For Student Councils to work effectively, the situation needs to move from a 'token participation' to 'active student participation'.

As a member of the WREC Management Committee outlined most appropriately, real participation should include four stages:

- (i) shared information;
- (ii) shared decision-making;
- (iii) shared action; and
- (iv) shared responsibility.

#### C. Needs in Relation to Student Councils

To ensure Student Councils operate effectively and contribute in a meaningful way to the school community, it is essential that:

1. Support for Student Councils comes from all levels in the school ie several teachers be committed to its operation and the school community hold a positive view of student participation;
2. skill development in the areas of school government and decision-making be seen as part of the curriculum rather than an extra-curricular activity;
3. students have access to administration facilities, funding, information and outside support;
4. students work in the area of school governance and be given recognition via assessment;
5. students be given adequate time to operate.

#### D. Project Support to Student Councils

The Student Action Project will seek to support Student Councils in several ways, such as providing regional networks, information dissemination, documentation and resources (see later).

The Student Action Project will also seek to support Student Councils on a more individual basis. This can be done by project staff working with a small number of schools for a few months ... regularly attending meetings, running workshops, initiating debate, helping structure meetings and constitutions. This process has already occurred to some extent this term, although interrupted by exams.

Many Student Councils are in the stages of setting up or restructuring. Support from the project can assist this process. Once a Student Council is up and running, the project could move on to support a different group ...

#### E. Student Action Projects

1. Development: Many Student Action projects and alternative curriculum projects operating in the Western Metropolitan Region have seen the development of student participation in a very positive light. Student Action, Research, Newspapers, community involvement, cross-age tutoring and Student Council projects operating have developed excellent models for student involvement in curriculum development, decision-making processes, communication and community involvement. To increase the event of Student Action projects, it is necessary to document past and present achievements as models for future projects and provide support to those projects still operating. Students involved in Action Projects could become consultants to groups regarding curriculum change and school governance.
2. Project Support for Student Action: It is envisaged that while I may concentrate on the area of Student Councils in 1984, Barry will concentrate on the area of Student Action and curriculum development. This will involve support for individual projects in setting up and operation, regional networking of such projects, documentation in various forms and the organisation of Regional Curriculum Forums using students as consultants.

It is important that the Student Action Projects reach students at all levels of education. Many students not involved in formal decision-making processes can be reached through involvement in the area of curriculum.

### STUDENT REGIONAL WORKING PARTY AND REGIONAL NETWORKS

It is important that students be able to view themselves from a regional perspective. Some of the reasons for this are:

1. Students are being asked to participate in Regional and State committees and thus need a central body of students to represent;
2. Students need support, information and idea structures outside their own school environment;
3. Many issues presently arising in relation to student participation and education are central to all students and would more effectively be tackled from a regional base.

The Student Participation Regional Working Party established this year through the Supplementary Grants (Disadvantaged Schools) Program, has provided an excellent opportunity for students and teachers interested in student participation to come together providing a basis for support and a forum for issues.

The organisation for this working party will be restructured in 1984, to give the group a stronger student base. Barry McDonald (a Regional Office consultant) will be responsible for its organisation. The main idea regarding this group's operation, is that Student Councils and Student Action Programs be asked to host a meeting, once a month. School groups may decide to work together (there being only 10 months in the school year) to hold meetings. The host group would be responsible for writing the agenda, informing people of the meeting time, chairing the meeting, organising speakers, topics of discussion, taking minutes and preparing facilities. This would encourage each meeting to become a regular event. This may also help support the development of a regional Student Union. This project could provide support to the Working Party by helping each host group organise meetings ...

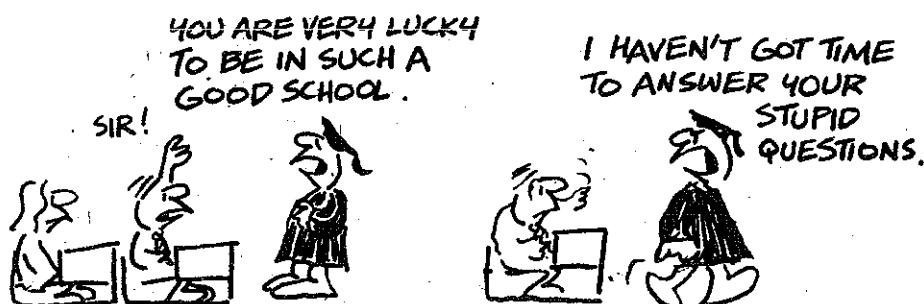
It is essential that students have a central structure from which they can be represented and can tackle issues. The Student Working Party will be responsible for providing representatives where State and Regional committees require student representation. The working party can also send delegations to the Minister and other relevant people regarding regional issues.

Students represented on the Student Action Project Committee will be linked to the Student Working Party.

It is also important that the Student Working Party establish strong links with the Regional Office. This will assist the Working Party in gaining strength and recognition in the Region.

Other networks the project will aim to support during 1984 are:

- a) a network of student councillors - this may work in cluster groups, as there will be over 80 councillors in the Region. It is important that students going onto School Councils receive regional support and in-servicing.
- b) a network of teachers supporting Student Councils. This may work as information exchanges or forums to discuss issues relating to adults involved in student participation. Such a network would also help to strengthen student networks in the region.
- c) a network of Student Action and Student Media projects in the region.





## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

One of the objectives of the Student Action Project is to take up issues in the area of education, encouraging the development of policy in the areas of discipline, curriculum, sexism, assessment, streaming, decision-making structures, ethnicity, class, achievers and non-achievers and employment. This aspect of the project was discussed at the brain-storming session on the 8th December. It was realised that while the project must hold a consistent stance on issues, the project's role is one of initiating informed debate. The project can act as a facilitator providing the structures, the information and the support necessary for policy development.

While the project is acting as an informer and a facilitator, there are certain issues the project will aim to create action around:

### A. Student Involvement on Regional and State Committees

With the recent push to have student representation on Regional and State Committees, many issues that need tackling arise. The problem of who the students are representing is a major one, happily to be alleviated in the Western Region by the presence of the Student Working Party.

At present, a Working Party has been established by TEAC - "Student Participation on Committees Working Party" - to address some of the problems in this area. A paper is being produced which will provide a guideline for committee members seeking student participation.

Student travel is a problem which needs to be sorted out regarding not only student participation in committees, but student participation in general. Students involved in action projects or school governance are generally required to travel throughout the region for various reasons. As yet there is no one system devised to solve this problem. Committees requiring student participation can be asked to provide money for taxis, but in other areas, there is no clear answer. In some way or form, whether it be regional or school council based, students need access to travel money. The Student Action Project will aim to work through the problems associated with student travel.

### B. Curriculum Development

The Student Action Project is committed to student participation in curriculum development. It is essential that curriculum be both relevant and interesting to students and that education meet the needs as far as possible of each individual student:

*The means of realising a curriculum in which knowledge is related to life must be examined. As has already been noted, an experience-based curriculum is not an end in itself but rather a means of bringing students to an understanding of ideas having broader significance and of developing in students the power and confidence to engage in reasoning and of integrating information about the world into their own structure of understanding.*

Schools Commission: Schooling for 15 & 16 year olds; p. 17

Education must connect with the society and the lives of its participants. The content of curriculum must be broadened to allow this to occur, encompassing active rather than passive learning. In order for students to become capable and confident in decision-making processes in their lives, they need to understand and develop these necessary skills through education. The Student Action Project will work towards the areas of school governance and decision-making as becoming an integral part of the curriculum. At present, these areas are still side issues, thus lack of knowledge and skill development holds back much possible student participation and students already actively involved receive little recognition for their work.

For education to reflect the needs and levels of each student, negotiation in curriculum is essential. Many exemplary models of negotiated curriculum have occurred in alternative courses throughout the Region. It is important that these models be documented and passed on with students acting as the main consultants.

It is important that the introduction of alternative curriculum courses be not seen as a form of streaming, but rather as an active 'option' for education, involving students at all levels of the educational spectrum.

*The introduction of alternative courses can have the effect of absolving the schools concerned from re-examining the fundamental bases of the curriculum for all students, especially if they are organised only for non-achievers or non-motivated students. They are then alternative in the sense of being inferior rather than different. They become a particularly insidious form of streaming.*

Schools Commission: Schooling for 15 & 16 year olds; p. 41

The recognition of the values of alternative courses by tertiary institutes and employers, along with action education projects being seen as an integral part of all education, is essential.

The Student Action Project will aim to examine the issues involved in curriculum development by:

1. working at the school level, initiating debate, providing information and supporting alternative projects;
2. documenting existing projects;
3. providing forums on 'curriculum issues' - these forums will be student organised.



### C. Assessment

It is important that students involved in school governance and Regional and State Committees receive recognition for this work via some form of credit. There is no one system to ensure that this happens. The Student Action Project aims to examine this area, seeking regional policy and ensuring that individual student's needs are met.

The whole area of accreditation will be taken up by the project, ensuring that teachers and students have all the information available to them on the different assessment methods. Assessment will also be an area where the project will provide forum for debate.

The issue of assessment is very much tied to the expectations of tertiary institutions and employers and those expectations enforcing the standardisation of crediting systems, thus setting up a situation where certain students must fail. Instead of assessing the individual achievements of particular students, students are forced into either a pass ('okay') or fail ('not okay') category.

*They've wanted the schools to do their dirty work for them. To rank students. And I think that ranking, the whole grading, ranking thing is irrelevant, in my mind, to education. It's been lumped upon schools in some obscure way, but I think that's an illegitimate demand that has been placed on schools. Even, we've found, where we are giving non-competitive descriptive assessments, we still have come up against the situation where, after giving an extensive, maybe a thousand word, description which employers have read and mulled over, about a student, the employer will turn to the school and say: "But does that mean that they've passed?" ...*

Issues from Schooling for 15 & 16 year olds: tape series: program 6

Attitudes towards standardisation need to be challenged and methods of assessment that involve the student and teacher working together, operating within the bounds of individual progress and providing descriptive material related to the achievement of the student, need to be explored.

#### D. Discipline

The Student Action Project aims to initiate debate on the subject of "discipline in schools".

Often the problem of discipline is seen in terms of individual behaviour problems. This is linked to "psychological problems", "bad attitudes", "bad home environment" or "a disturbed community" rather than re-examining the structure and organisation of the environment where the problems occur.

*For most schools, strategies to diminish levels of disorder are based on a series of sanctions, rules and surveillance techniques which aim to establish and maintain conformist behaviour in students. Those techniques are popularly referred to in the staffroom as the 'law and order approach', 'show them who's boss' and 'we run a tight ship here'. Implicit in these approaches is the tendency in schools towards containing the symptoms of disorder rather than investigating and eradicating its causes. 'Discipline problems' are students who disobey, transgress and rebel. The causes of 'misbehaviour' are seen to be located within the hands of offenders.*

#### Resistances to School, p 13

The debate around discipline needs to examine the total school environment, teacher-student relationships, student participation, courses offered etc. If discipline is seen as a control mechanism in the hierarchical mode, it only serves to alienate students:

*By making it clear to students that it is their duty to obey without demur a set of pre-decided school rules and to conform to the school's norms ... schools are restricting their students' scope for analysing and deciding issues for themselves.*

#### Schooling for 15 & 16 year olds; p. 59

In the Report of the Working Party on the Abolition of Corporal Punishment, participation of all school community members in the development of discipline policies is seen as essential to create a conducive learning environment:

*Schools which are best at developing sound learning environments are those which accord equal status to all members of the school community and which have effected decision-making processes based on participatory rather than authoritarian models. Such schools are more likely to be adaptive to changing needs than those relying on hierarchical structures. The maintenance of order in schools is dependent upon all members sharing a mutual respect for the rights and feelings of others.*



#### PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT

It is important that parents are included in the discussions on student participation. One possible way the Student Action Project could involve parents, is to assist in the organisation of evenings where students can explain to parents the importance of student participation. An evening like this was conducted by students from Boronia High School with considerable success. Parents can also share their efforts and expertise in participation in school decision making with students.

## PRIMARY SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT

Although the Student Action Project is focused on post-primary education, part of the time could be allocated to the development of student participation at the primary level.

Due to the time limits of 12 months, it has been suggested that one primary school, possibly Yarraville West PS, where some positive action has already occurred, be involved. In this way, any positive outcomes of student participation in this particular school can be documented to serve as an example for primary level student participation.

*Pamela Ward, Project Officer*



VICTORIA 150  
GROWING TOGETHER 1984-5

### YOUTH PRESS PROJECT

A Project to co-ordinate a Youth News Magazine, produced in conjunction with a range of secondary students across the state. Funded as an initiative of Victoria's 150th Anniversary, the Project has the resources to be an exciting stimulus for Victoria's Youth.

The positions available will entail, an emphasis on skill training in areas of organising, developing contacts and support networks, researching and producing written and visual materials and production. The Project Workers would be expected to facilitate and encourage the development of student initiative in regard to youth rights.

The project requires workers for 2 positions.

**1. LIAISON WORKER.** To work with youth in schools and other institutional settings. To promote, organise and conduct workshops related to the News Magazine.

**2. PRODUCTION WORKER.** Involves the preparation layout, co-ordination and final stage work of material in close co-operation with students involved in the project.

Experience in working with youth in education and/or community action settings would be desirable.

Salaries will be in the range of \$23,442 to \$24,633 with other appropriate entitlements under the Community Education Officers Award.

Appointments will run from March 1984 to November 1985.

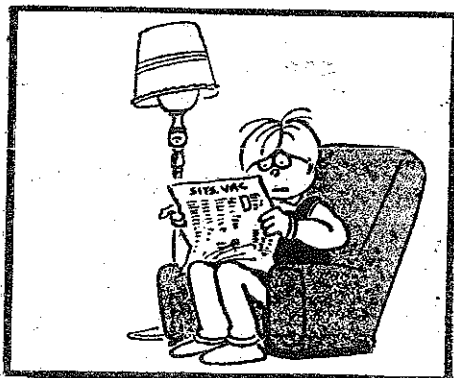
A third position of Production Assistant, employed under the Commonwealth Employment Program will be advertised shortly.

Written applications with references should be sent to:

**YOUTH PRESS PROJECT**  
**C-O WESTERN REGION EDUCATION CENTRE**  
34 Kingsville St, West Footscray 3012.

Applications close Thursday 8th March 1984.

Further information is available from the Western Region Education Centre.  
Phone 314 3011.



## Peace Education in a Liveable World

The purpose of this conference is to discuss current trends in Peace Education, to define "Peace Education" and to discuss the role that can be played by teachers, students and trainee teacher institutions in advancing, peace.

It is not intended that the conference simply be a "talk fest", but also that some action follow on from the meeting.

Dates: Friday 23rd March, 1984 (evening)  
Saturday 24th March, (all day)

Place: Melbourne College of Advanced Education  
(Carlton campus)  
Education Resource Centre  
Room 132

Cost: \$5.00 employed  
\$2.00 concession (students, non-income  
earners, pensioners).

Costs cover lunch on Saturday, tea and coffee.  
Childcare will be provided.

Sponsors: Melbourne College of Advanced Education  
MCAE Students' Association (Carlton)  
Australian Union of Students

Thanks to: Teachers for Nuclear Disarmament  
Victorian Association for Peace Studies

For further information contact  
MCAE Students' Association ph: 341 8657

Speakers at the Conference will include  
Michael Norman, Director of Curriculum,  
Victorian Education Department; Cathy  
Block, NSW Teachers Federation; Pro-  
fessor Art Pearl, University of Cali-  
fornia at Santa Cruz.

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# YOUR COMMENTS

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Congratulations on another year of top-rate information sharing through CONNECT. I am looking forward to promoting student participation in school decision-making through my new position within the Schools Council Unit. Rest assured that I will be actively encouraging all School Councils to become subscribers as a means of keeping their student representatives in touch with what is going on in "Youth Participation in Education Projects".

*Ray Davis, School Councils Unit, Education Department, Treasury Pl, Melbourne 3002*

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A Centre for Youth Studies has been established at the Magill Campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education. The Centre will be independent of the College structure and be managed initially by a board of six with the coordinator being responsible for the daily activities of the Centre.

Research and Project grants may be arranged through the South Australian Consultancy Centre (SACESS Incorporated) to enable the generation of money to support research. The main functions of the Centre for Youth Studies will be to:

1. promote, undertake and disseminate research into youth questions and to engage in debate in this area;
2. develop a resource centre of material concerning youth questions for community and professional use;
3. offer advocacy to Governments, institutions and individuals concerning youth policies and to respond effectively to youth questions.

It is hoped that the Centre for Youth Studies will provide a forum for people working in South Australia on issues concerned with youth in addition to providing an information service on request.

Such a centre cannot be successful without the support of all those involved in youth affairs, both in South Australia and nationally, and as a result, the Centre asks all those involved to keep the Centre informed of all related matters, events, publications and research projects. If you can help, please send information to the coordinator:

*Mike Presdee (Coordinator), South Australian CAE, Magill Campus, Lorne Ave.,  
Magill SA 5070 (08) 332.4711*

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It was good to hear from you ... it's nice to open up the lines of communication once again.

A national contingent from Australia would certainly be welcome for the 1985 National Association of Student Councils conference. I believe that may be most appropriate although our National Leadership Training Centers may be another program some students could attend. Housing is included in the registration fees. Unless we could work out some sort of grant we would have to charge the fee. I have enclosed information about this year's programs.

You mentioned a May national meeting in Australia. If you could keep me informed as to what you have in mind perhaps we could be involved in some way. It is so difficult to keep up correspondence. I do hope you will get to the USA this year so we can meet. Our NASC national conference is being held June 28 - July 2 in Rhode Island, site of the America's ... I mean, Australia's Cup Race.

It sounds as if the Victoria State Government has moved forward on student representation. We are in a conservative mood here in the US and are moving backwards.

*Rocco Marano, Assistant Director, Division of Student Activities,  
1904 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091, USA.*

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The International Youth Year (1985) Secretariat in Queensland is on the move from the Department of Education to the Division of Youth Affairs, Department of Welfare Services and Ethnic Affairs. Please note:

*Denise Reghenzani, State Coordinator, International Youth Year, PO Box 153,  
North Quay, Q 4000 (07) 227.6105*



Since our group has recently begun an EIP funded newspaper, I was advised to contact you. I have seen some copies of CONNECT at the Fringe Arts Offices and saw some common concerns in these issues with our own. Our paper is called TIGHTROPE and hopes to speak clearly and intelligently about the life of our Inner Urban Youth.

Glenn Tabuteau, Project Officer, Fitzroy CYSS, 156 Napier St., Fitzroy 3065.

## NEWS & REVIEWS

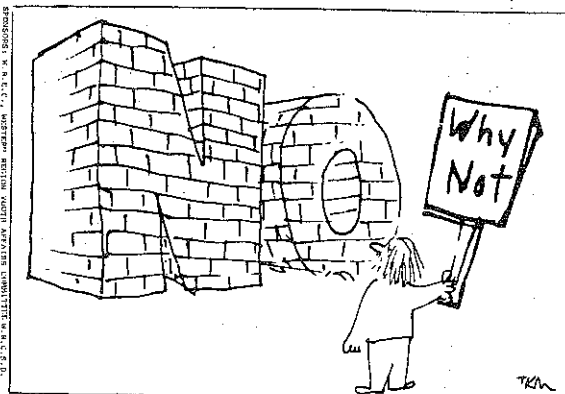
As mentioned in Pamela Ward's interim project report (elsewhere in this issue), a report has been issued of the Student Action in Education forum held at the Western Region Education Centre on Wednesday 3rd August 1983. This report has been produced in two parts - a booklet containing the information given to participants in the forum (some of which was reprinted in a previous issue of CONNECT) and a summary of the day and of the evaluation comments.

Copies of the report may be obtained by contacting Pamela Ward at:

Student Action in Education Project,  
Western Region Education Centre,  
34 Kingsville St.,  
West Footscray 3012.

Ph: (03) 314.3011

### OUR RIGHTS? OUR SCHOOLS? OUR FUTURE?



GOVERNMENT HAS RECOGNISED STUDENTS' RIGHTS, SO COME TO OUR FORUM AND FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN USE THEM. DON'T BE PUT DOWN BY ANYBODY. STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS!

STUDENTS MUST NOW HAVE MEMBERS IN SCHOOL COUNCILS, SO DON'T NEGLECT IT, USE IT TO YOUR OWN ADVANTAGE.

AT THIS FORUM WE WILL BE DISCUSSING: STUDENT REPRESENTATION BODIES, STUDENTS ON SCHOOL COUNCILS, STUDENT RIGHTS, REGIONAL STUDENT LINK-UP, ADULT ROLE IN STUDENT PARTICIPATION. DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THESE ISSUES?

#### Student Action in Education

THE FORUM WILL BE HELD ON  
DATE: WEDNESDAY 3RD AUGUST  
TIME: 9.30 A.M. - 3.15 P.M.

PLACE: WESTERN REGION CONTACTS: FAY MELEWGA, COLIN BRITTON,  
EDUCATION CENTRE, PHILLIP GILMORE, 314 3011.  
34 KINGSVILLE ST., C/O W.R.E.C.  
WEST FOOTSCRAY, WEST FOOTSCRAY, OR PRINCIPAL AND OR S.R.C. MEMBERS.

SALE

### AUDIO TAPES:

### ISSUES FROM 'Schooling for 15 & 16 Year Olds'

Issues from 'Schooling for 15 and 16 Year Olds', a major report from the Commonwealth Schools Commission (1980), are taken up by Melbourne radio producer Geoff Barbour in a ten program audio tape series, released by the National Council of Education Centres.

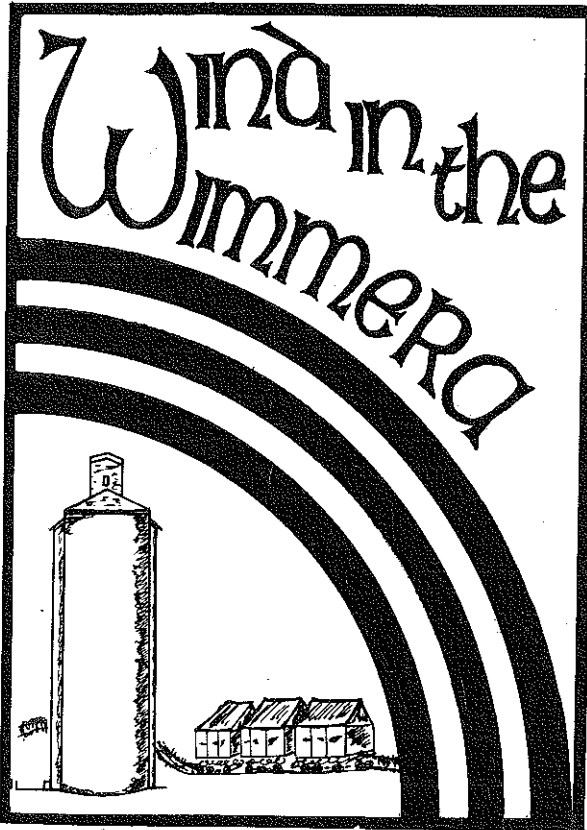
The programs have already been broadcast on public radio stations around Australia and are now available on cassettes.

The programs have been trialled and found suitable in a variety of discussion group situations, including staff conferences and parent meetings. They are designed to generate lively discussion and are generally successful in achieving this. There is a balance struck between interviews with educational administrators, practising teachers, parents and students.

The programs cover the following issues: The Broad Issues, A Changing World, Is Staying On the Answer?, Teacher-Student Relations, Key Skills, Credentials, On Becoming Adaptive, The Policy Makers, Are Schools Flexible?, The Issue of Work, Just Another Kid, Come to Our School and Beyond the Compulsory Years.

The material is available as a discussion group kit. Each kit consists of seven cassettes, carrying the ten principal programs, together with three ancillary programs, and ten copies of a 116-page workshop book with full transcripts and discussion starters, some suggested by teachers who have used the material. The kit costs \$45 posted and can be ordered from the Education Centre, PO Box 249, Warragul 3820.

Further information can be obtained from the coordinator of the series, Jack Howe, at the above address.



"This book is the work of students (mostly), parents and teachers at Warracknabeal High School in north-western Victoria.

Warracknabeal is the heartland of the Wimmera region, a land of low, undulating plains that flow on forever under a vast sky. It is a land that people love - despite what they sometimes say. It is a land of poets and dreamers.

There has been much written about the Wimmera, but nothing as far as we know from the pens of young people. Histories and old photographs show us the taming of the land - the clearing and the fencing. In this book, however, you will discover an awareness of the beauty of the land itself, and of what we stand to lose if we fail to face the future with love and sensitivity.

There is also love of physical motion - dancing, skiing, football, netball, cricket, riding. There are stories and poems that defy a neat tag. There are drawings and photographs - some old, some new.

We hope you enjoy our book!"

\$5.50 plus \$1.50 postage/handling  
thus \$7.00 total cost posted.

Judith Pope, Carol Draper, John Tonkin, John Martin  
Warracknabeal, October 1983

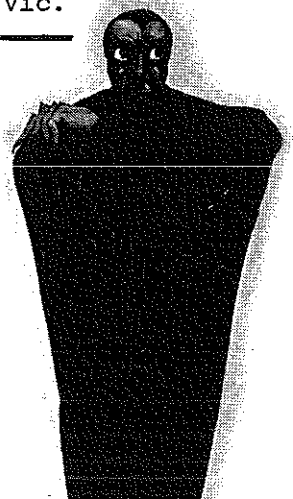
When John Martin was at Ballarat East High School, he was associated with the production of *The Golden Shaft*. Now that he's at Warracknabeal High School, another volume has been produced. This 152 page book (printed in a limited edition of 400 copies) is well described by the above introduction. It is another testimony to the involvement of young people in interpreting and building their community.

Enquiries as to the availability of *Wind in the Wimmera* can be directed to John at Warracknabeal High School, Tregear Ave., Warracknabeal 3393 Vic.

At the moment, these hopes are very tentative. Your comments are most welcome:

- May 1985: National Workshop of Youth Participation in Education Projects ... in Adelaide?
- June 1985: National student group visits the National Association of Student Councils Conference in America and then splits into groups visiting on "student leadership", "media" and "curriculum action".
- Late 1985: An International Youth Forum? The above group to act as workshop leaders - reporting back.

All of that depends on finances being available at both a central and a local level - students' communities would have to raise a substantial amount. More details later.



# MATERIAL AVAILABLE

## Articles:

Code	Description	Pages	Cost
168	Children's Express Australia: Outline	3	50¢
169	Youth Forum 83 Package:	119	\$10.00
169A	Youth Policy Institute Report	30	\$3.00
169B	Youth Forum Newsletter		
	Vol 3 No 1 September 1983	15	\$1.50
169C	1979-1983 Four Years of Change	47	\$4.70
169D	Potential Topics for YF'84	2	30¢
169E	The Youth Forum Conference Topics	12	\$1.20
169F	Youth Forum - outline	4	50¢
169G	Youth Forum 83 Program Guide	9	90¢
170	West Wyalong Student Government Package:	53	\$5.00
170A	Teacher Report	1	30¢
170B	Various newspaper reports	8	80¢
170C	International connections	2	40¢
170D	"Fred the Paper" Dec 83	14	\$1.40
170E	"Fred the Paper" Nov 83	12	\$1.20
170F	"Fred the Paper" Oct 83	4	50¢
170G	"Reality Street" Aug 83	12	\$1.20

## Publications Received:

We wish to stress that the following publications are not for sale. However, they are available for perusal by arrangement: contact CONNECT: (03) 489.9052.

### AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

Paddlewheel (Wilcannia, NSW) to Vol 8 No 41 15 Dec 1983  
The Mallacoota Mouth (Mallacoota, Vic) to issue 338 24 Feb 1984  
Presto (Preston schools, Vic) Dec 1983  
Rave (Winlaton school, Vic) No 19 December 1983  
Embark (Pembroke HS etc, Vic) Issue 3 1983  
Caulfield Capers (Caulfield HS, Vic) November 1983  
Panorama (Westall HS, Vic) Issue 4 1983  
Spectrum (Coburg TS, Vic) magazine  
Community Interest (St Albans TS, Vic) 1983

### OVERSEAS STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

Long Long Ago (Suva Intermediate School, California, USA) Vol 2 Issue 1 Winter 83  
Exploring Hunterdon's Heritage (Hunterdon Central HS, Flemington, NJ, USA) Vol 3 83-4.

## Other Sources:

The Ticket (The Station, Sydney, NSW) Vol 4 No 6 Nov 1983  
IYY News Sheet (North Quay, Q)  
Bulletin (Queensland Youth Organisations, Q) Dec/Jan  
Update NIE (Newspapers in Education, Washington DC, USA) Vol 10 Nos 1,2 Jan, Feb '84  
A Strategy for the Coordination and Development of Youth Policy in Victoria - A Discussion Paper (Department of Premier & Cabinet, Vic) November 1983  
Other Ways (Alternative Education Resource Group, Vic) Nos 14, 15 Dec 83, Feb 84  
Network News (Sydney, NSW) Nov, Dec 1983, Feb 1984  
Our Rights? Our Schools? Our Futures? - Conference Report (Western Region Education Centre, Vic)  
The Fringe Bugle (Fringe Network, Vic) Nos 18, 19 Jan, Feb 1984  
Wordworks (EMPLOY, Vic) Issues 4,5 Nov 1983, Jan/Feb 1984  
Media 3 (Rusden Media, Vic) No 20 November 1983

# PHOTOCOPY: COMPLETE: RETURN:



PHOTOCOPY this page; COMPLETE all the details; RETURN it:

To: CONNECT, The Newsletter of Youth Participation in Education Projects,  
12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria Australia

From: NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

.....Postcode: .....

SUBSCRIPTION: \$5 for a 1-year subscription ..... \$ .....  
\$20 to become a PATRON SUBSCRIBER (for one year) ..... \$ .....  
\$50 to become a SUPPORTING SUBSCRIBER (for one year) .... \$ .....  
\$100 to become a SUSTAINING SUBSCRIBER (for two years) ... \$ .....  
\$1000 to become a LIFETIME SUBSCRIBER (for ever) ..... \$ .....

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19 (\$2) 20 (\$2) 21 (\$3) 22/23 (\$3) 24 (\$3) 25 (\$3)

\* As We See It (\$3.50) - Brunswick students' writing ..... \$ .....

\* Leaving School (\$3.60) - Moreland School-Work Program .. \$ .....

\* It Isn't Happening in Brunswick - Moreland S-W-P (\$4) .. \$ .....

\* Adelaide Conference Magazine (\$2) - August 1981 ..... \$ .....

\* You And Aunt Arie (\$10 + postage) - "how to" book ..... \$ .....

\* Lynall Hall Community School 1982 Yearbook (\$1.50) ..... \$ .....

\* Riff Raff Soundtrack Album (LP) (\$8 but need to collect) \$ .....

\* The Fitz-Coll Directory (\$1.50) - Fitzroy HS students .. \$ .....

PHOTOCOPIES: Copies of the following articles:

Numbers: .... \$ .....

INDEX: To "Articles Available" and CONNECT to issue 17/Oct 1982 (80¢) \$ .....

TAPES: Various tapes - Art Pearl (6 tapes); SRC Day (\$4 each/\$2 + tape) \$ .....

TOTAL ENCLOSED: ..... \$ .....